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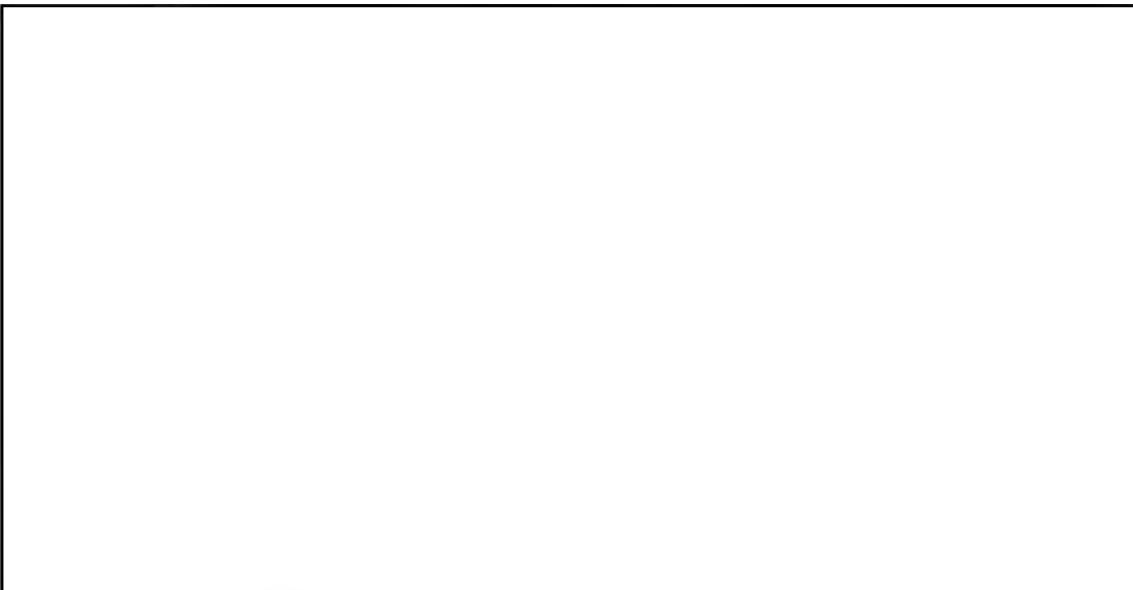
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Panama: National guard withdraws support of Samudio.
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【 Panama: National Guard Commandant Vallarino reportedly has struck a deal with National Union (NU) candidate Arnulfo Arias and will not obstruct his apparent victory in last Sunday's election.

】 Vallarino probably feared precipitating a civil conflict by trying to uphold the fraudulent attempts by the Robles government to rig the election in Samudio's favor. All available information indicates that Arias won by a significant margin and was not willing to stand by peacefully while he was robbed of the presidency for a second time.

In a communiqué issued last night, Vallarino stressed the internal unity within the guard and guaranteed to accept the decisions of the national elections board which is scheduled to begin the official count today. All ten parties participating in the elections are represented on the board and Arias appears to have the majority necessary to certify his victory. The progovernment electoral tribunal is the final check on the board, but the general apparently will ignore its voice in the matter.

There are rumors circulating that President Robles now may try to remove Vallarino, but such action reportedly would result in guard recognition of second vice president Max Delvalle as president. Delvalle--a member of Arias' coalition--was sworn in as Robles' successor by the National Assembly following the unsuccessful impeachment attempt in March.]

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【 Although some pro-Samudio guard officers might attempt to oppose Vallarino's decision to accept Arias as president-elect, the general's view will probably prevail. The sudden reversal of Vallarino's earlier policy of support for the government side may spark some street violence by Samudio partisans, but it is doubtful that these elements would be capable of a major confrontation with the guard.

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